# BURNLEY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

**Lecture Programme for 2025/6 Season**

The programme commenced on September 10th when Denise North presented **"From Battleground to Underground: a Lancashire Architect"** The architect was Bolton born Charles Holden who was one of four principal architects responsible for the design of a good number of WW1 cemeteries in Belgium and France and later in the 1930s designed and modernised many of London's underground stations. On two occasions he refused a knighthood. Denise explained why he did this and why today he remains relatively unknown.

Denise gave the presentation using the clip-on microphone which had recently been acquired and was considered successful by attendees.

October 8th
**The Book of St. Peter.**
by Annette Roadley

Annette produced this magnificent book to commemorate the 900th Anniversary of St Peter's Church, Burnley. The book was produced to highlight the importance of ordinary people in the community. The letters of St Peter were used for inspiration and contributions were collected from parishioners, members of church groups and local schoolchildren. Members of the general public were also invited to copy a verse from St Peter's letters for inclusion. Annette, a very talented artist, illustrated the book with biblical scenes along with current local scenes offering modern interpretations. Annette bound the book herself and designed its cover. An incredible work and one which all present were able to enjoy and appreciate.

November 12th
**Railway Development in Lancashire.**
by Dr. Paul Salveson

This was a very well-presented analysis of the development of the railway network in Lancashire. The opening of the Manchester – Liverpool Railway in 1830, the world's first inter-city line, was to be operated by steam locomotives and the Manchester manufacturing area and the Liverpool mercantile area developed simultaneously throughout the 19th century. It was explained how the rapid expansion of the railways took place, detailed descriptions of the various lines in East Lancashire were given and also the early relationship between the East Lancashire Railway and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. The decline of steam was discussed and of course the Rose Grove locomotive depot and extensive marshalling yards where steam locomotives were working until the very end of the Steam Age in August 1968.

**These things happen!**

Dr. Paul Salveson had difficulty in his journey from Kent's Bank to Burnley and arrived 50 minutes late due to his train being cancelled due to a lack of a guard! He had to watch as the 'cancelled' train passed through the station without passengers or guard. This was particularly ironic as not only was he coming to talk about railway development but for many years he had been a guard on the railways! This reminded me of an occasion many years ago, before mobile phones or sat nav, when a speaker failed to arrive at all! He too had travelled a good distance and did arrive in Burnley but failed to find our location and returned home! His expertise was the Development of Turnpike Roads, but Burnley had him baffled apparently!

December 10th
**A.G.M.**

Twenty people attended the Annual General Meeting. All current members of the committee were re-elected. After the business meeting there was an opportunity for members to socialise whilst enjoying tea and mince pies served up by Mike Townend. This was followed by a slide show presented by Tony Mitchell of black and white photographs of Burnley taken in the fifties and recent updates taken by Tony as a comparison. Members of the audience were encouraged to participate with questions and comments. Tony's presentation was much appreciated.

**2026 Forthcoming Lectures**:

January 14th
**A Variety of Films About Burnley – Walter Bennett Memorial Lecture.**
by Mike Smith

February 11th
**A Visual of Burnley: Then and Now.**
by Edward Walton

March 11th
**Pockets of Pacifism in East Lancashire. Local Peace Campaigners During the Two World Wars.**
by Steven Illingworth

April 8th
**Trials of the Lancashire Witches.**
By Dr. Graham Kemp

**BURNLEY CIVIC TRUST**

Burnley Civic Trust has a large collection of books held at its workshop from initial donations from the Burnley Express, The Brian Hall Collection, Burnley & District Historical Society, and other donations. They also hold bound Council Minute books from 1890's to 1950's and a large selection of 1850s/1912/30s/50s ordnance sheets.

The workshop is usually open on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and Edward Walton can be contacted for information at other times.
A Civic Trust lecture will take place on February 4th. 2026 about a pleasure boat the *Matchless* which sank in Morecambe Bay on 3rd September 1894, and at the time the sinking was the largest loss of life in Morecambe Bay. 25 people drowned many of them from Burnley. Further details are available on the web site.

## TOWNELEY HALL

Towneley Hall re-opened in July after completion of an extensive repair and restoration programme. A visit for the Society was arranged and Tony Mitchell of the Towneley Hall Society gave an interesting tour of the outside of the hall describing the various architectural details. The most interesting of these were the recent restorations. The repair of the turret clock face and workings were generously funded by the Towneley Hall Society.

## KELP

The two year "Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture" project, finished at the end of November. Volunteers worked in four local libraries digitising the photographs held there to make 56,000 images available on-line in the Lancashire Archives Red Rose Collection.

## MANCHESTER ROAD STATION

Work commenced on the 22nd September to clear the land adjacent to Manchester Road above the westbound side of the station and a drop-down kerb had been created, no doubt preparatory work for improved access to both platforms. The station now serves half a million passengers per year, with growth of 23% being experienced

between 2015/16 and 2019/20 according to published figures from the Office of Rail and Road. The improvement will see the installation of a new footbridge linking platforms 1 and 2 with stairs and lifts. The lift shafts to both platforms shall contain 12-person lifts with a new footbridge between lifts. The current ramp to platform 1 will be amended to accommodate the footbridge and will be maintained to maximise accessibility to/from the station. (ref Lancashire County Council: Burnley Manchester Road Railway Station Access for All Improvements). Slowly but surely perhaps?

## REQUESTS TO THE SOCIETY FOR INFORMATION

Jennifer Ross, a student, has requested help in tracking down a dissertation regarding Burnley Co-op: reference Riding D., "Burnley Equitable Co-operative and Industrial Society 1860-1914", University of Lancaster MA dissertation 1983. Jennifer is currently working on her own dissertation about the Co-op buildings on Hammerton Street and would appreciate any information. E-mail Jennifer.ross@ou.ac.uk

John Wilson has written a Cornwall/Lancashire novel based on the life of his great grandmother who was born in Cornwall 1n 1847 and died at Lowerhouse Lane Burnley in 1930. The novel is fiction based on fact woven around actual events and has 54,000 words. He is asking for information and also a proof reader. No payment is offered. E-mail asthouart@live.com

### WEAVERS' TRIANGLE VISITOR CENTRE

Work is continuing on renovating the Centre and a replacement flight of stairs has been installed up to the Toll Office. An Art Exhibition Space and temporary Local History Exhibition should be unveiled next season. Exciting plans to re-vamp the Centre are underway and volunteers are working hard. Anyone wanting to offer their services to help would be much appreciated.

### MACKENZIE CHESS TABLE & SHIELD

The Society has been approached by the Burnley Chess Society asking for help with finding a home for Dr. Mackenzie's chess table and the Thursby Chess Shield which bears his name. These are the subject of an article in the current issue of ***Retrospect.***

### PUBLICATIONS

***Retrospect Index***: Molly Haines has produced a follow-on index to be combined with the original index as a single document. 100 copies have been ordered and should be available for sale at the January meeting.

Edward Walton has re-edited Jack Nadin's "*Old Ightenhill*" book and has added many photographs. The book is available for sale with proceeds going to Friends of Ightenhill Park.

## WEB SITE/FACEBOOK

Both of these sites are well visited and have resulted in requests for information and new members joining the society.

## RETROSPECT

The 2025 issue of ***Retrospec***t was available and distributed to those attending the AGM. Copies will be available for collection at future meetings. Once again Philip Cregan of Nu Age Print and Copy has produced a quality document and his efforts are very much appreciated.

Anyone intending to submit articles for the 2026 issue of ***Retrospect*** should contact the editor Denise North for advice on length of article, format and protocol. Several articles are already in preparation and submissions should be forwarded before the end of August.

## AND FINALLY—

We are now at the winter solstice and already the daffodils are beginning to show and so we look forward to a New Year, in the meantime Very Best Wishes for a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas.

**DENISE NORTH CHAIRMAN OF B&DHS.**
**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

St Peter's Christmas Tree Festival 2012